

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2022

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

I write to express my concern regarding increasingly frequent and troubling reports of organized retail crime (ORC) across the country. Recent months have seen a sharp rise in the number of such crimes and local and state authorities are in danger of being overwhelmed. Due to this rising tide of lawlessness, retailers are facing around \$45 billion in annual losses, up from \$30 billion just a decade ago.¹ State and local law enforcement are doing all they can. Critical federal assistance, however, remains absent.

According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), 65% of its survey respondents in 2021 indicated that so-called theft gangs are exhibiting more violence and aggression, with nearly 70% also reporting increases in organized retail crime.² Both increases are markedly larger than in previous years. Further, the rise of online commerce platforms and the multijurisdictional nature of such theft, often crossing state lines, makes this a uniquely challenging issue for local authorities. In fact, in 2021 NRF found that 78% of loss prevention specialists supported federal ORC action.³

Building on other Members drawing attention to this issue and the success of Operation Booster Buster, I urge the Justice Department to take action and develop a national strategy to address the alarming rise in organized retail crime.⁴ Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your prompt reply.

¹ Rebecca Ballhaus and Shalini Ramachandran, “Ben Dugan Works for CVS. His Job Is Battling a \$45 Billion Crime Spree,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 1, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/cvs-home-depot-theft-organized-crime-11630505851>.

² National Retail Federation, 2021 Retail Security Survey, *National Retail Federation*, 2021: 10, <https://nrf.com/research/national-retail-security-survey-2021>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Office of Senator Chuck Grassley, “Grassley Presses DOJ, DHS On Response to Spate Of Organized Theft,” Dec. 21, 2021, <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-presses-doj-dhs-on-response-to-spate-of-organized-theft>; Department of Justice, “Members of Retail Theft Organization Face Federal and State Charges,” *Department of Justice*, Jan. 13, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndok/pr/members-retail-theft-organization-face-federal-and-state-charges>.

Sincerely,



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



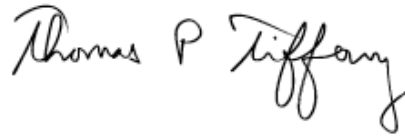
Mike Johnson
Member of Congress



Ted Budd
Member of Congress



Scott Fitzgerald
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress



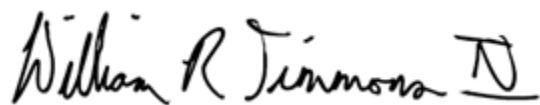
W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Member of Congress



Young Kim
Member of Congress



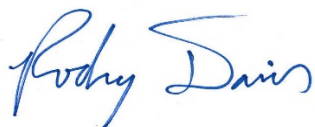
William Timmons
Member of Congress

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Burgess Owens
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Katko".

John Katko
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney Davis".

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Meijer".

Peter Meijer
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew R. Garbarino".

Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lee Zeldin".

Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress